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833 783 ing and start the housework, she would pollute the food were she not to wash first. She must bathe after having had intercourse, and older women in the household watch to see that she does so. It would be a major sin for a woman to attend to her children in the [761] morning without bathing first, and if her child dies in infancy her husband's mother may blame her for having killed it by this terrible omission.

833 Young couples generally have coitus with the man lying on top of the girl, his legs outside hers. If this does not satisfy her she wraps her legs around his buttocks. Otherwise she will certainly be more satisfied if she sits astride her husband while he sits on the edge of the bed. If necessary she will fondle him to arouse his enthusiasm. It is said that one needs a large penis to satisfy a woman properly. [826] Without both testicles the penis will not stiffen effectively: this is indeed their only function. These intimate details can become a subject of ribaldry when a girl is noticed to be visiting her parents too often: people may chide the husband for having a small organ, or suggest he try the second and third positions just described, or else nickname him *O:gotte* ("one-ball").

The amount of sexual activity depends on the husband's stamina and interest, and becomes progressively less as he gets older. Until their first child is born a couple may do it several times nightly, two or three times a week. After a birth has occurred they probably do it less often, and should not recommence coitus until the fifth month after the birth. Young married men boast to their friends about the number of times they have done it in one night; but such statements are necessarily prone to exaggeration. The terminology used [196] in such bawdy discussions may range from *ke:vatu* (a noun — "fuck") to the somewhat more seemly *ma:duvatu* (similarly translatable, but literally meaning "doing"). *Katira* ("it makes, does") is generally used of animals, but may occur in reference to a lusty man in the phrase *e:ru katira*, "to fuck like a buffalo." (This is considered something of a compliment.) The usual pattern of intercourse seems to recognize a "safe period." Couples have coitus once 833 842 or twice in the period between the sixth and the fourteenth or fifteenth days after menstruation, which they rightly consider to be the period when conception may occur. Those however who want no more children have intercourse only from the twenty-fifth or twenty-sixth day after the previous menstruation.

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853 the woman is startled, or if she comes into contact with a "bad wind" as we discuss below (5.4). When a nursing mother comes
[262] from a family known for its low milk yield she is given butter-milk, made from boiled cow's milk, and with it a rich diet of clarified butter and food made from little millet. She does no hard work and enjoys complete rest. (Nothing is rubbed onto the breast.)

5.3. If a nursing mother is eating irregularly, or having sweet things, or too much food, such behaviour can affect the nature of
853 her milk. To counteract its poorer quality a certain medicine can
278 be given to the child, but only between its fifth and twelfth months
757 (generally just in the fifth and sixth). It is made from two plants, *homogu* and false privet, used in the proportion 2:1 and baked with clarified butter. The material is then ground on a special stone and mixed at the same time with some of the mother's milk. A pinch of salt is usually added. Finally half as much butter as the volume of this mixture is added to it, and the resultant medicine is divided into three parts, each rolled into a ball 2 cms. in diameter. The baby swallows one of these balls on the morning, a second in the evening, and the third the next morning.

853 If a nursing mother eats too many sweet things, she may trans-
262 mit worms to her baby through the breast-milk. In fact, small
164 children are much more liable to worms than their mothers. A woman thus may not have worms while her nursing infant does; and if she eats too many sweets in the eighth or ninth month of pregnancy, worms may appear in her child during the first three months of life.

853 5.4. A nursing mother is regularly afraid that if she goes near a
783 corpse or smells another birth, or if she smells anyone other than
784 her own husband in the early morning who has not yet bathed since coitus the night before, the breasts may cease to give milk. Some are even afraid that a sudden noise will have this effect, and others are afraid of hearing talk of any terrifying subject. This phenomenon of a "bad wind" associated with the polluting aspect of coitus, birth and death works in devious ways. When a newly delivered mother is in the room before another woman's delivery occurs she can stay there and the smell at the time of birth will not affect her; yet if she enters a room where a birth has just occurred the bad odour there can affect the flow of her milk.
853 If an adult dies in her presence her milk is not threatened by a
761

"bad wind" unless the death occurred in her own home. The effect of a "bad wind" the woman has encountered can also be felt by her baby or transmitted through the milk to her baby, and then it will make him sick.

One or two days after a wedding the bride, by this time perhaps no longer a virgin, returns on a belief ceremonial visit to her parents' home. As she enters the village the woman accompanying her calls out for people to keep infants and nursing mothers out of sight. The bride can set eyes on unweaned infants, but their parents must make sure that neither the children themselves nor their mothers see the girl, lest their milk dry up by reason of the "bad wind" associated with the girl's recent sexual activity. Were a nursing mother to see the bride she would probably curse her, and this could cause infertility in the latter.

More generally it is felt that the most dangerous "bad wind" would be one associated with a person who came to look at the baby just after having had intercourse. Such a person should first take a bath, then put on some clean clothes and wait at least half-an-hour. In the same way if an apparently pure man comes to visit a baby and he has travelled more than a mile he will bring a "bad wind" with him. He should therefore wait in the yard or on the veranda for a short time before entering the house. In this situation the mother would even wait the appropriate amount of time before bowing to his hand if the visitor were her own father. If a nursing mother is obliged to be near a corpse, she also will take a bath and change afterwards before going near her baby. Should an unweaned baby die all other nursing mothers in the village and neighbouring hamlets are expected to visit the bereaved house before the next sunset. They ask the unfortunate mother how she is feeling. Badagas believe that if any nursing mother who was inregular contact with this woman failed to observe this common courtesy, her own infant would soon become ill. And if such a woman nonetheless does fail to visit she must not set eyes on the bereaved mother again until after the next new or the next full moon. This is said to be because the latter might become envious on seeing the other mother nursing, and her sorrow would somehow affect that woman. The nursing mother who failed in this customary courtesy would be afraid that her breasts would dry up, should she meet the bereaved woman shortly after burial of the dead child.

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have done an excess of good deeds over bad it is destined for heaven, whereas if there is an excess of bad deeds over good it is consigned to hell. "If you live a good life you can wait and see the human world; when you die you can wait and see the heavenly world." Badagas do not believe in the further reincarnation of souls, for each soul suffers seven births, but only the seventh incarnation is in human form, the previous ones having been as animals. God assigns a soul to each person at birth, and writes on his brow the exact number of years he or she will live. Even God can sometimes be wrong, however, because an attack by a wild animal, a suicide, murder or some other calamity, may deprive the body of life before it was destined to die. In this dilemma the soul is obliged to remain on the face of the earth for the balance of time until the day when God had intended it to depart this life. In the words of another proverb: "While living he has no blessing of God; when dead he is not in heaven." In this way ghosts are to be found on the Nilgiri Hills, hovering just above the ground with their feet pointing backwards and making a frightening sound—sometimes a screech and sometimes a groan.

Ghosts in general continue to have ordinary human needs, which they seek to satisfy. One ghost told listeners during a seance that it had lived for a while in hollow trees, but it found this very uncomfortable. Mostly ghosts want to be inside people so that they will be safe, warm and well fed. When a ghost has been exorcised from somebody, it may therefore possess another person or else live inside an animal if it is not properly trapped. Further expression of the ghost's humanity comes in the seance, when it may ask for unusual foods, liquor, cigarettes or good clothing, as a pre-condition for its leaving the possessed person. Particularly the ghosts of young people, suicides because of their anxieties and frustrations, may ask for the things they could not enjoy while alive, and will demand extra singing and dancing during the seance too.

Some Badagas are possessed by non-Badaga ghosts, in which case a ghost may speak through the victim's mouth in Toda, Malayalam, English or some other language not in fact known to the possessed person! Interpreters are sometimes brought in to help with such an exorcism.

Despite their widespread belief in ghosts, Badagas are initially skeptical of a person's claim to be possessed. They will therefore begin a seance by a questioning period to see if the ghost is "genui-

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gingly of the elderly: "After becoming aged one's greed increases;" more sarcastic ones on the same theme are these: "As greed increases, the lifetime lessens," "As mist catches onto a peak, so her vilest characteristics catch hold of an old woman," and again, "Is it medicine for old age, like advice for a bad time?" This latter one refers to the belief that there is no further need for medicine when a person is old, just as a bad man is beyond need of advice. (The general world for all kinds of medicine, *maddu*, is used in this last proverb; it also means "magical potion," "opium" and "poison," however).

9.2. The general attitude towards adult women is not a charitable one: it is succinctly summed up in the saying, "The man knows the nature of others; his wife is an expert in cooking." In contrast to this, though, the status of women is never higher than in old age, and in a few cases old ladies have been members of the otherwise all-male village councils. The Lingayat Badagas in fact treat a post-menopausal woman as a man; but most Badagas do not, for if orthodox they still prohibit an old woman from eating or drinking in the inner and most sacred parts of the house. No ceremonies mark the occurrence of menopause; but Lingayat women are often given a *Linga* symbol to wear after it has occurred.

9.3. Older people have friends in their own village, but not elsewhere because of the difficulty they have in getting around. They select friends of equal age, and hence similar memories; but whether or not the friends are equally well-to-do seems unimportant. A pair of widows or else a pair of widowers are commonly good friends; and provided they are very old, even a widow and a widower can be close friends, treating each other as fictive brother and sister, without other villagers misinterpreting the relationship. Again, if they are extremely elderly, two men and their two wives may treat each other as *four* brothers. Then there is nothing scandalous about an old man sitting with the wife of his friend and talking to her for hours. In contrast with this, an old man with a young wife will not be particularly friendly with another old man whose wife is elderly.

9.4. It is believed that if a man wears gold his lifetime will lengthen. If on the other hand he sees two crows in the act of sexual congress, he will die within a year. An elderly man receives this information calmly; but a younger man will try to avoid his fate by counteracting the omen. This is done by going to a hill above a neighbouring hamlet, and shouting out to the villagers that he—mentioning himself by name—is dead. As he is careful that no one

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sees who has shouted the news, some of his closer friends and relatives from that hamlet will immediately leave for his house, to pay respect to his corpse. A woman can resort to the same subterfuge only if she can find a man to make the dreadful pronouncement on her behalf. The process of misleading the mourning friends is supposed to prolong a person's life: it may also be done by relatives for an influential man who is indeed sick, but who they hope will be enabled to live longer by this process of cheating death. This concern contrasts with the cynical treatment sometimes offered to dying people in the last century: "When a rich Badaga is very ill and the agony approaches all the relatives come and gather near him and see to it that he is well provided for his journey into the realm of the dead. For this end they make the dying man swallow two small gold pieces with butter... If the ill man does not die very soon and the relatives think he lasts too long they give him opium in order to hasten his hour of death." (Mörike 1849: 102).

As mentioned above, the sight of two crows in congress is an omen of impending death. Other birds give similar information. If the forest eagle-owl (*Huhua nipalensis*) calls ˈgu::ˌ there will certainly be a death soon in the hamlet where it was heard: if it is already past the new moon, death will come before the full moon. Thus if anyone is sick in the hamlet closest to where this bird is heard, people know he will die; and if no one is sick, women nearing their delivery take special care. (Other kinds of cries made by the same bird indicate whether or not rain is coming.)

Nothing is more certain than death. As various Badaga proverbs put it: "If you live to six years you will die; if you live to a hundred years you will die"; "Even though you can escape at any time you cannot escape the time of death;" "You have paid up his padded account after seeing it; there is no sorrow when a man dies in old age"; "Even if all the [Nilgiri] divisions leave you, the burial ground won't leave you alone"; and again, "Even if one lives a thousand years, death won't pass him by."

9.5. When an old person becomes sick and seems likely to die, he is given a separate bed even if he did not previously have one, and is treated with circumspection. Messages about his true condition are sent to a number of other Badaga hamlets where the dying man has relatives, inviting those people to visit him. Unless the dying person is more than 40 such visitors are not invited, because a much greater chance of recovery is presumed, while a large party

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754 (*c*) Illness can also be the work of non-Badaga shamans or
177 sorcerers, who can send a bad spirit into the victim. As with ghost
753 possession, it has to be removed by an exorcist who knows the
[755] appropriate spells. It is said that in earlier days every Kurumba who had learnt sorcery was allowed to try his power sout. This would be decided by a formal council of the tribe, who would give the novices a stipulated period, usually one to four weeks, during which the young men could test their abilities. The Badagas would then be warned of what was to come, so the villagers could take every precaution and stay indoors at night. Each youth was permitted to kill one man by sorcery during this period. Deaths in the
•[961] Badaga community were also occasionally ascribed to the sorcery of Todas (Rivers 1906: 261, 635); and Kurumbas say there are many Badaga sorcerers too.

828 (*d*) Emotional and mental problems are otherwise said to be the
753 result of sins done by a man's ancestors, whereas bodily diseases
783 are in most cases an effect of the patient's own sins, as in the case of ulceration cited below (see *f*). Thus if the wealthy man becomes poor, or a poor man becomes rich, he attributes the change of fortune to the deeds of his ancestors. If a man lacks appetite, or does not enjoy his life or possessions, then he has a sickness resulting from the sins of his ancestors. There is no cure for it; and so if many cures are attempted and none works, it is thereby known that he has an illness caused by ancestral sin. Leprosy and mental diseases are seen as ultimately caused by that same sin. (As an explanation for the therapist's impotence this is of course very effective.)

732 (*e*) Often we find frequency of an infirmity being explained as
826 an effect of "blood." For example, in one family there are two girls and five boys. One boy and both girls are normal, but three other boys are deaf and dumb, and one is fairly deaf but can talk. As the situation was explained to me, "there must be some wrong in the parents' blood." This is perhaps still an allusion to ancestral sin.

753 (*f*) More immediate causes of some illnesses lie in one's diet or
261 bodily activities, even in uncleanliness. Among the dietary problems there is a general malady called *so:lu*, "over-heat," caused by eating insufficient milk products. Eating bad food, or eating too quickly, can also bring unfortunate results.

753 (*g*) Over-exertion may dislodge the colon or an artery and bring
826